

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 02322 121336Z

73

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SUBJECT: LABOR PROBLEMS OF ITALY'S COMMERCIAL PILOTS

REF: (A) NAGY-GOOTT TELCON 2/6/76; (B) 75 ROME 16327

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1. SUMMARY: ITALY'S AIRLINE PILOTS, THE VAST MAJORITY OF WHOM ARE ORGANIZED IN THE INDEPENDENT UNION ANPAC, HAVE BEEN SEEKING TO RENEW THEIR CONTRACTS SINCE THE END OF 1974. THE MAIN HINDRANCE HAS BEEN ANPAC'S RESISTANCE TO ATTEMPTS TO ABSORB THE PILOTS (AND THUS ANPAC) IN ONE LARGE AIR TRANSPORT BARGAINING UNIT. RESISTANCE HAS TAKEN THE FORM OF NUMEROUS STRIKE ACTIONS, RESULTING IN MANY FLIGHT CANCELLATIONS. MORE RECENTLY, ANPAC HAS APPEALED FOR RELIEF TO THE ILO, AND FOR ASSISTANCE TO THE AMERICAN PILOTS' UNION, ALPA. NO RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM IS CURRENTLY IN SIGHT, ALTHOUGH IT WILL ALMOST SURELY COME ABOUT IN THE TIME-HONORED ITALIAN FORMULA

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PAGE 02 ROME 02322 121336Z

OF A COMPROMISE. THE ITALIAN PILOTS SEEM DETERMINED TO PRE-

SERVE THEIR AUTONOMY IN WHATEVER COMPROMISE IS ULTIMATELY DEvised. END SUMMARY.

2. ITALY'S AIRLINE PILOTS HAVE BEEN IN A STATE OF AGITATION FOR MANY MONTHS NOW. THEY HAVE BEEN RESISTING, THROUGH A LONG, IRREGULAR SERIES OF STRIKES, BEING CO-OPTED INTO A LARGE BARGAINING UNIT WHICH WOULD EMBRACE ALL ASPECTS OF THE AIR TRANSPORT INDUSTRY.

3. THE VAST MAJORITY OF ITALIAN COMMERCIAL PILOTS (SOME 1600 OUT OF 1700) ARE MEMBERS OF THE INDEPENDENT UNION ANPAC (ASSOCIAZIONE NAZIONALE PILOTI AVIAZIONE COMMERCIALE - NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COMMERCIAL AVIATION PILOTS). THE TRANSPORTATION AFFILIATES OF THE THREE MAJOR ITALIAN LABOR FEDERATIONS HAVE ONLY A TOTAL OF 150 PILOTS ORGANIZED, WITH THE REMAINING 50 UNORGANIZED. ANPAC IS A MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF AIR LINE PILOTS ASSOCIATIONS (IFALPA).

4. SINCE THE END OF 1974, ANPAC HAS BEEN SEEKING TO RENEW ITS BIENNIAL CONTRACT WITH INTERSIND, THE MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION WHICH REPRESENTS ALL GOVERNMENT-OWNED/OPERATED INDUSTRIES, IN THIS CASE ALITALIA AND ITS SUBSIDIARY DOMESTIC AND CHARTER COMPANIES. THEY HAVE FAILED IN THIS BECAUSE INTERSIND, RESPONDING TO PRESSURES BROUGHT BY THE FEDERATION CGIL-CISL-UIL (CCU), THE ROOF ORGANIZATION FOR ITALY'S THREE MAJOR LABOR FEDERATIONS, HAS SOUGHT TO GET ANPAC TO AMALGAMATE ITS DEMANDS WITH THOSE OF FULAT, THE CCU ORGANIZATION SET UP TO ORGANIZE ALL AIRPORT WORKERS, FROM BAGGAGE HANDLERS TO PILOTS.

5. THE CCU DRIVE CAN READILY BE SEEN AS PART OF A GENERAL DRIVE BY THE FEDERATIONS TO CRUSH THE INDEPENDENT UNIONS WHICH COMMAND SUBSTANTIAL STRENGTH IN CERTAIN SECTORS SUCH AS TRANSPORTATION. THIS DRIVE HAS COINCIDED WITH THE REORGANIZATION OF THE ROME INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (FIUMICINO) BY ITALIAN CIVIL AIR AUTHORITIES. IN THIS REORGANIZATION, THE INDIVIDUAL AIRLINES, INCLUDING THE INTERNATIONAL CARRIERS, HAVE BEEN DIVESTED OF THEIR ROLE IN EXTENDING AIRPORT SERVICES. THESE LATTER HAVE BEEN UNIFIED (WITH GENERALLY CHAOTIC RESULTS) IN THE ROME AIRPORT AUTHORITY.

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PAGE 03 ROME 02322 121336Z

6. ANPAC, PROBABLY WITH GOOD REASON, FEELS THAT, WERE IT TO ACCEDE TO THE COMBINED FULAT-INTERsIND PRESSURE TO SUBLIMATE ITS INTERESTS TO ANY EXTENT TO A LARGER GROUPINGS OF AIRPORT/AIR TRANSPORT WORKERS, IT WOULD LOSE ITS BARGAINING POWER AND ULTIMATELY ITS IDENTITY. THEY WOULD BECOME A PART OF A BARGAINING UNIT CONTAINING SOME 25,000 DISPARATE WORKERS. (ANPAC CLAIMS THAT FULAT HAS ONLY 5000 OF THESE WORKERS ORGANIZED; FULAT CLAIMS 12,000 MEMBERS; THE ANPAC FIGURE IS MORE CREDIBLE).

7. TO PRECLUDE THIS EVENTUALITY, ANPAC HAS ENGAGED IN NUMEROUS WORK STOPPAGES, RESULTING IN THE CANCELLATION OF INNUMERABLE FLIGHTS. A TYPICAL TECHNIQUE UTILIZED HAS BEEN FOR THE UNION TO HAND EACH PILOT A SEALED ENVELOPE JUST PRIOR TO EMBARKING FOR TAKEOFF. IN THE COCKPIT, AFTER THE PASSENGERS ARE STRAPPED IN READY TO GO, THE PILOT OPENS HIS ENVELOPE WHICH CONTAINS A GO OR NO-GO MESSAGE. IN THE LATTER EVENT, THE FLIGHT IS CANCELLED. ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS ANPAC HAS ALSO UTILIZED A 24 HOUR STRIKE, BY ALL MEMBERS.

8. IN THE MEANTIME, THE MINISTRY OF LABOR, AND IN PARTICULAR MINISTER TOROS, HAS MADE REPEATED EFFORTS TO MEDIATE THE SITUATION. ONE COMPROMISE PROPOSED BY TOROS WAS TO INCORPORATE PILOT DEMANDS AND CONDITIONS IN THE MASTER AIR TRANSPORT CONTRACT, BUT TO ALLOW ANPAC TO APPEND PROTOCOLS AND ADDENDA TO THE AGREEMENT. ANPAC, HOWEVER, HAS REJECTED THIS PLAN AS A MENACE TO ITS ORGANIZATIONAL INTEGRITY. MOST RECENTLY (FEBRUARY 10), ANPAC AND FULAT LEADERS MET IN AN ATTEMPT TO RESOLVE THE IMPASSE. DESPITE SOME INITIAL OPTIMISM, THE MEETING WAS EVIDENTLY A TOTAL FAILURE. ANPAC HAS APPEALED TO THE GOVERNMENT TO RESUME THE LONG-OVERDUE BARGAINING ON A NEW CONTRACT.

9. ANPAC IS BECOMING CONCERNED THAT TIME MAY BE WORKING AGAINST IT. THEY HAVE ADDRESSED AN APPEAL TO THE ILO, ASSERTING THAT, IN SEEKING TO FORCE A UNITARIAN AIR TRANSPORT CONTRACT ON THE PILOTS, THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT IS IN CONTRAVENTION OF ILO CONVENTIONS 87 AND 98 (RESPECTIVELY, FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE AND BARGAIN COLLECTIVELY; ITALY RATIFIED BOTH CONVENTIONS IN 1958). ACCORDING TO THE ROME ILO OFFICE, THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN ASKED TO COMMENT ON THE ANPAC CHARGES. SIMULTANEOUSLY, ANPAC HAS APPEALED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 04 ROME 02322 121336Z

FOR ASSISTANCE TO THE AMERICAN AIR LINE PILOTS ASSOCIATION (ALPA). AN APPROACH WAS ALSO MADE TO THE EMBASSY, JUST PRIOR TO AN ANPAC MEETING WITH MINISTER TOROS, WITH THE RATHER ODD REQUEST THAT THE EMBASSY ASSURE TOROS THAT ANPAC WAS SERIOUS IN ITS OPPOSITION TO THE ATTEMPTS BEING MADE TO INCORPORATE THEIR BARGAINING PREROGATIVES IN THE GENERAL AIR TRANSPORT FRAMEWORK.

10. ANPAC HAS ENJOYED CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS IN SECURING THE COOPERATION OF ITS MEMBERS IN IMPLEMENTING THE VARIOUS MEASURES IT HAS PROCLAIMED. WHETHER IT NOW FEARS THERE MAY BE BREAKS IN THE RANKS IS NOT CLEAR. OCCASIONAL VEILED THREATS, BOTH LUDICROUS AND SERIOUS, HAVE BEEN VOICED AGAINST ANPAC. THUS, LAST OCTOBER, AFTER MILITARY LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS HAD SUCCESSFULLY BEEN SUBSTITUTED FOR STRIKING RAILWAY WORKERS, SOME PAR-

LIAMENTARIANS PROPOSED SUBSTITUTING MILITARY PILOTS FOR THE STRIKING ANPAC MEMBERS. MORE SERIOUSLY, THERE HAVE BEEN RUMBLINGS OF MILITARIZING THE AIRLINES IN SOME WAY, A PLOY WHICH WOULD PROBABLY BE FACILITATED BY THE FACT THAT MOST OF THE COMMERCIAL PILOTS ARE FORMER MILITARY OFFICERS.

11. COMMENT. CLEARLY, THE CCU AND ITS AFFILIATE FULAT ARE SEEKING ORGANIZATIONAL CONTROL OVER THE AIR TRANSPORT INDUSTRY, AND ANPAC STANDS IN THEIR WAY. ANPAC CAN EXPECT LITTLE RELIEF FROM THE ILO, BEYOND POSSIBLY THE FOCUSING OF SOME FAVORABLE PUBLIC ATTENTION ON THEIR PLIGHT. SHOULD ALPHA AND IFALPA CHOOSE TO ASSIST ANPAC, THEY ARE PRESUMABLY IN A POSITION TO EXERT CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE ON BEHALF OF THEIR ITALIAN CONFEDERATES. IT CERTAINLY SEEMS INAPPROPRIATE FOR THE US GOVERNMENT TO GET INVOLVED IN THIS OBVIOUSLY ITALIAN SITUATION, PARTICULARLY AT A TIME WHEN THE ITALIAN PRESS IS FULL OF ACCUSATIONS OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENTAL MANIPULATION OF THE ITALIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM. THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT WE ARE INDIFFERENT TO THE SITUATION. GIVEN THE LARGE NUMBER OF AMERICANS WHO ANNUALLY UTILIZE THE ITALIAN AIRLINES, ANYTHING WHICH MAKES ITALIAN PILOTS UNHAPPY (AND 1500 OF THEM ARE CLEARLY UNHAPPY) IS A MATTER OF CONCERN. WE FEAR, TOO, THAT IF ANPAC WERE SUBMERGED IN THE MANNER PROPOSED, THE PILOTS WOULD NOT BE IN AS FAVORABLE A POSITION TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS ON AIR TRANSPORT SAFETY, AN AREA IN WHICH THE ITALIAN AIR TRANSPORT INDUSTRY CAN STAND IMPROVEMENT; ANPAC HAS LED THE DRIVE FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SAFETY ORIENTED IMPROVEMENT AT ITALIAN AIRPORTS. THE LIKELIEST OUTCOME OF THE PRESENT IMPASSE IS THAT, IN THE TIME-HONORED ITALIAN MANNER, A SUITABLE COMPROMISE WILL BE COMPOSED. IT WILL NOT, HOWEVER, BE EASY; EXPERTS HAVE BEEN SEEKING TO DEVISE SUCH A COMPROMISE FOR THE BETTER PART OF THE LAST TWO YEARS. VOLPE

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